

TARANTULA KILLER.

A Wasp That Is the Powerful Spider's Mortal Foe.

The tarantula killer has a bright blue body, nearly two inches long and wings of a golden hue. As it flies here and there in the sunlight, glittering like a flash of fire, one moment resting on a leaf, the next on a granite boulder, it keeps up an incessant buzzing, which is caused by the vibration of its wings. No sooner does the tarantula hear this than it trembles with fear, for well he knows the fate in store for him when once his mortal foe perceives his whereabouts. This it soon does and hurries to the attack.

At first it is content with flying in circles over its intended victim. Gradually it approaches nearer and nearer. When it is within a few inches, the tarantula rises upon his hind legs and attempts to grapple with his foe, without success. Like a flash the wasp is on its back. The deadly stings have been avoided. The next instant a fearful sting penetrates deep into the spider's body. Its struggles almost cease. A sudden paralysis comes over it, and it staggers, helpless like a drunken man, first to one side and then to the other.

The symptoms, however, are only of short duration. While they last the tarantula is but a few inches away, awaits the result. Nor does it have to wait long. A few seconds and all sign of life has disappeared from the tarantula. The once powerful legs curl up about the body, and it rolls over on its back.—Chambers' Journal.

JUST TEA LEAVES.

The Spectacle They Present Under a Powerful Microscope.

"Have a look," said the histologist. And he rose from the beautiful, delicate microscope, and his companion took his place.

There was a little fiddling and adjusting of tiny screws. Then the tyro said:

"Ugh! Ghastly! What have we here—a railroad wreck?"

"You are looking," answered the histologist, "at a part of the remains of a Ceylonese caterpillar."

He withdrew that slide and put another in its place.

"Another tragedy?" the tyro asked.

"The remnants of a beetle," the histologist replied.

A third slide was placed beneath the lens.

"This," said the tyro, "should be a battlefield."

"It is only," returned the scientist, "a commingling of the desiccated fragments of a fly, a centipede, a moth and a slug."

The tyro yawned.

"Histology is interesting," he said in a bored voice. "Where did you get these specimens?"

"Out of a packet of tea."

"A packet of tea? What kind of tea?"

"Ordinary tea."

"Heavens! I am a tea drinker. Explain yourself."

The histologist, smiling, said:

"Tea grows on bushes. The leaves are plucked by hand. Imagine yourself stripping rosebush after rosebush, miles on miles, of their leaves. Well, that is what tea picking is like."

"The native pickers work fast. They pick as many as twenty-five pounds of leaves a day—a bundle bigger than a man."

"Now, the tea plant is the prey of a hundred insects, and the picker in his haste doesn't pause to brush off each leaf or to wash it, for he works, as we say, by piece work."

"The picked leaves are dried on charcoal fires. They shrivel under the heat and the insect, larvae and chrysalids among them change to dust. This dust looks to the ordinary eye like leaf fragments, but under the microscope it looks, as you remarked, like an insect railroad wreck or a pygmy battlefield. It tastes like—but you know as well as I do what it tastes like."

"Tomorrow," said the other, "I am going to bring some of my wife's tea here to examine with you."—New York Herald.

Antiquity of Cheating.

False weights were found in the ruins of the oldest city that has yet been exhumed. And false weights will probably be consumed when the earth drops into the sun and the heavens are rolled together like a scroll. Ancient records and ancient statute books are full of evidence that every modern practical device down to adulterations and crooked scales was familiar to our ancestors of the plateau of Iran before the migrations. Vice is the old inhabitant; virtue is the newcomer, the immigrant, received with reluctance and compelled to fight for every inch of ground he gains.—Reader Magazine.

A Great Lack of Love.

There is a pleasant story being told just now of an Irish priest who, taking leave of his congregation, gave his reasons for going: "First, you do not love me, for you have contributed nothing to my support; second, you do not love each other, for I have not celebrated a marriage since I arrived; third, the good God does not love you, for he has not taken one of you to himself; I have not had a single funeral."—London Telegraph.

Why She Loved Her.

Mrs. Cummins—So you love your grandmamma, do you, Gracie? And why do you love her? Gracie—Because she used to punish mamma when mamma was a little girl. I hope she used to spank mamma as hard as mamma spanks me.—Boston Transcript.

The Flight of Birds.

One of the few men to recover sight after being blind from the birth of recollection was reported to have wondered at nothing so much as the flight of the birds. "Why do not people make more fuss about them?" he said.—London Outlook.

Faulty Theory.

Gus de Smythe—Those new boots of yours squeak awfully. Perhaps they're not paid for yet. Johnny—That's all nonsense. If there is anything in that, why don't my coat and vest and my trousers and my hat squeak too?

Old Enough to Notice.

"Are your papa and mamma at home?" asked the caller. "No," replied little Marguerite; "one of them may be here, but they never are both at home at the same time."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Generous.

"Some men say," remarked the beautiful heiress, "that I have no heart." "Oh, that doesn't matter," replied the poor but willing to be honest youth; "I'll give you mine."—Chicago News.

METAL PENS.

One of Ancient Roman Make Has the Distinctive Slit.

Some curious one has collected a mass of interesting facts concerning metallic pens. Some of these references run back as far as the fourteenth and even the thirteenth century, and, curiously enough, in the case of the manuscript of Robert d'Artois, the forger scribe, is said to have used a bronze pen in order to disguise his writing and make his deception more safe. A Roman metal pen is said to have been found at Aosta, not a mere stylus, but a bronze pen slit, and there is some evidence of a pen or reed of bronze nearly as early as the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. More than a hundred years ago some steel pens were made in Birmingham for Dr. Priestly, and some of these placed into the hands of Sir Josiah Mason in his early days with Mr. Harrison, but all seem to have been lost. The first pen of metal of a definite date, beyond all question, is one in a Dutch patent book of 1717. At about the same time a polite ode of Pope's refers to a "steel and golden pen," but these were evidently luxuries only, and it was not until about the end of the first quarter of the last century that metallic pens became more generally in use. In the "Local Notes and Queries" in the Birmingham Weekly Post definite evidence has been given of steel pens as early as 1806 and more commonly in 1817, but it was about 1823 and 1824 that the great revolution came by which pens were made by a cheaper process—the hand screw press which pierced the pens from steel rolled into tube fashion and the joint formed the slit, but these required considerable labor to shape them into pen form. The use of the screw press belongs to the period of John Mitchell, Joseph Gillot and Josiah Mason, but on a careful review of the facts it seems to be clear that John Mitchell has the best claim to be considered as the original introducer of press made pens.—Buffalo Times.

PITH AND POINT.

Being worthless pays no dividends.

Keeping a diary is nearly as hard work as keeping a dairy.

Being favorably impressed is the cheapest way we know of being a good fellow.

Nothing makes us quite so mad as to have people say, "What made you do it?"

It is terribly hard to impress people with the importance of aiding in a good cause.

Every one realizes when he goes to a photographer's that he is not looking his prettiest.

It is all right to do things for your town, but first do things for your home and family.

We are all pretty easily pleased when we consider that three or four times a day we see exactly how we look in the looking glass.—Atchison Globe.

Baltimore Crabs.

The price of a deviled crab in Baltimore runs down quite a scale. Beginning with 15 cents in the fashionable hotels, it drops to 10 at the ordinary eating bar and then to 5 when bought from the greasy basket of the good natured crab man. In the tiny Italian cook shops deviled crabs can be enjoyed at the rate of 3 cents each, and in the saloons along the water front they are often stacked up in a huge dish on the free lunch counter. With all these opportunities for feasting on the well seasoned "debbil" it is little wonder that Baltimoreans are considered the crab connoisseurs of the nation.—New York Herald.

Honest Retrievalment.

Let the touch of assistance offered to those who stumble be freighted with such buoyancy, strength and encouragement that it will prove an impetus. It is often in the establishing of one's footing that the balance is lost—for the lack of poise or some indefinable something. There is infinitely more credit in honest retrievalment than in the even rut of moral being and continuance.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Perfectly Safe.

"Bridget, I have to go out this evening, and I want you to see that your mistress gets this note without fail as soon as she comes in."

"Yiss, sor, I'll just leave it in the pocket of the trousers ye've taken off. She be sure to go through them."—London Tatler.

Honest About It.

"What is the difference between history and fiction?"

"Well," answered the unbelieving person, "one great difference is that fiction frankly owns up to being largely untrue."—Washington Star.

Earnings.

Office Boy—W'y, cert, I want more pay. I'm only getting "four" a week and give my mother all I earn. Proprietor—What do you do with the other three and a half?—Puck.

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